

Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program

Grant Application Webinar



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MHPG Grant Program Overview

- Montana Historic Preservation Grant (MHPG) Program is a state-funded program created in 2019 as a result of Senate Bill 338 (SB 338), Sections 1 through 17.
- MHPG Program is designed to support public or private entities with the preservation of historic sites, historical societies, or history museums through grant funding and demonstrating the economic impact of historical resources throughout the state.
- MHPG Program provides the opportunity to stimulate economic development, community revitalization, and statewide tourism through increased investment, job creation or retention, business expansion, and local tax base growth.
- MHPG coordinates with the wider historic preservation technical assistance available and utilizes the diversity of funds to address both the financial and preservation gaps of projects. Program funding invests in the critical point to help projects move forward, catalyzing local revitalization and economic growth.



Eligible Applicants

- Person
 - Individuals must apply through a non-profit or in coordination with a local government
- Association
 - For-profit or not for profit organizations and businesses
- Governing Unit
 - Local Governments: City, County, or Consolidated
 - Tribal Government
 - Waiving sovereign immunity for tribal government applicants is required and will be a provision included in the grant contract if awarded. This would be specific to the grants scope of work and timeline only. Please contact program staff with questions about this provision.



Matching Funds

- Match is not required for non-profits and governmental entities, but may increase the competitiveness of an application
- A minimum match of 25% of the total project cost is required for all **for-profit** applicants.
 - For-profit applicants do not need to secure match before applying; however, documentation of match will be required after MHPG awards are made.
 - In-kind donations are not considered eligible match.



Eligible Project Types

Eligible applicants can apply to complete projects or activities for the preservation of historic sites, historical societies, or history museums including:

- A. Internal or external “brick-and-mortar” improvements that will address infrastructure, building renovation, maintenance, or building code issues.
- B. Improvements that will enhance security, climate control, or fire protection; and
- C. Projects with a total cost over \$50,000 may use up to 10% of grant funding for planning and/or grant administration costs that are directly related to preservation activities A. and B.



Historic Sites

Historic sites will be considered eligible if one of the below criteria is met:

- A. Structure or site is listed on National, State, or Local Historic Registry
- B. Structure or site contributes to a historic district
- C. A structure more than 50 years old and has documented significance to the history of a Montana community or region



Eligible Funding

- Eligible applicants may apply for funding up to \$500,000 per eligible project.
 - Only one application per project is permitted each application cycle.
 - This does not preclude an application for a subsequent phase in the next application cycle.
- Total available funding is derived from the tax collections allocated in 15-68-820(3)(b) and (4)(c) and deposited into the Historic Preservation Grant Account and further carried out according to the guidance established in Senate Bill (SB) 338.



Application Submission

- Applications are due **February 28, 2020** and must have the following MHPG application information:
 - Appendix A: A MHPG application including responses to Statutory Criteria review criteria,
 - Appendix B: Completed Environmental Review forms that comply with the information in these guidelines.
 - Associated Documents: As applicable, relevant information and associated documents.
- One hard copy and one electronic copy of the MHPG application, any relevant information (such as photos and National Register nominations), and associated documents (such as plans or design documents) must be postmarked or delivered on or before the application due date to:

Department of Commerce,
301 South Park Ave.,
PO Box 200523,
Helena MT, 59620

- It is preferable that electronic copy of application information and associated documents be transmitted via the file transfer service at <https://transfer.mt.gov>.



Project Examples: Museum



Project Examples: Non-Profit



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Project Examples: Individual



Project Examples: Business



Project Examples: Historic Site



Selection Process

- Commerce staff has no decision-making authority over any application and only provides recommendations to the legislature that are advisory.
- Commerce will present recommendations to the legislature by the 15th day of the regular legislative session. The legislature will make the funding decisions.
- To prepare the recommendations, Commerce will review all applications in consultation with the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), before they are submitted to the legislature.
- Commerce may take additional information into account based upon Commerce's or other agency's knowledge about a proposed project or community in the scoring of an application.
- Commerce staff will review applications based on the extent to which the proposed project relates to each of the six (6) statutory criteria found in SB 338 and the application guidelines.
- To facilitate Commerce's review, applications should be organized according to the appendix format outlined in the Application Submission section of the guidelines.
- The applicant may not submit any additional information after the application deadline, unless requested by Commerce staff or is part of the Environmental Review process or in order to clarify information already presented in the application.



Statutory Criteria:

- a) The degree to which the project supports economic stimulus or economic activity, including job creation and work creation for Montana contractors and service workers;
- b) The degree to which the project activity can demonstrate the purpose and need of the project. This includes whether it provides features that establish or enhance security, climate control, or fire protection for museums or address infrastructure, maintenance, or building code issues for museums, historical societies, or historic sites;
- c) The degree to which timing of the project can be completed without delay, including access to matching funds and approval of permits, if needed;
- d) The degree to which the project activity contributes historic or heritage value related to the State of Montana;
- e) The degree to which the applicant demonstrates a successful track record or experience of the organization directing the project; and,
- f) The degree to which the project's expected ongoing economic benefit to the state as a result of the project completion.



Environmental Review

- MHPG projects are a state action subject to the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).
- MEPA specifies three different levels of environmental review, based on the significance of the potential impacts.
 - (1) exempt or excluded from MEPA review;
 - (2) environmental assessment (EA);
 - (3) environmental impact statement (EIS).
 - Most projects may typically be excluded or require an environmental assessment.



Environmental Review cont.

- 1) Designate an Environmental Certifying Officer
 - For local governments this would be the Chief Executive Officer
 - For businesses or Non-profits this would be the owner/CEO or executive director, respectively.
- 2) Determine and review the proposed scope of work
- 3) Determine if the project is considered Exempt from MEPA review under ARM 8.2.304(5)



Environmental Review cont.

Exempt from MEPA review under ARM 8.2.304(5)

- Projects listed as statutorily or categorically exempt from MEPA review are not required to complete an Environmental Assessment and so do not need to complete the Environmental Checklist (Appendix B-2). If a typically exempt activity may cause significant public controversy related to its effect on the human environment or may affect sensitive cultural or environmental resources, proceeding with an EA is advised.
- Typical activities which are exempt under ARM 8.2.304(5) include:
 - Administrative actions (routine clerical or similar functions, including but not limited to administrative procurement, contracts for consulting services, or personnel actions);
 - Minor repairs, operations, and maintenance of existing equipment or facilities;
 - Projects that involve only minor repairs or rehabilitation to an existing facility, including functional replacement of an existing facility or facility components;
 - Projects which are not listed as exempt under ARM 8.2.304(5) require an Environmental Assessment and the Environmental Checklist (Appendix B-2).



Environmental Review cont.

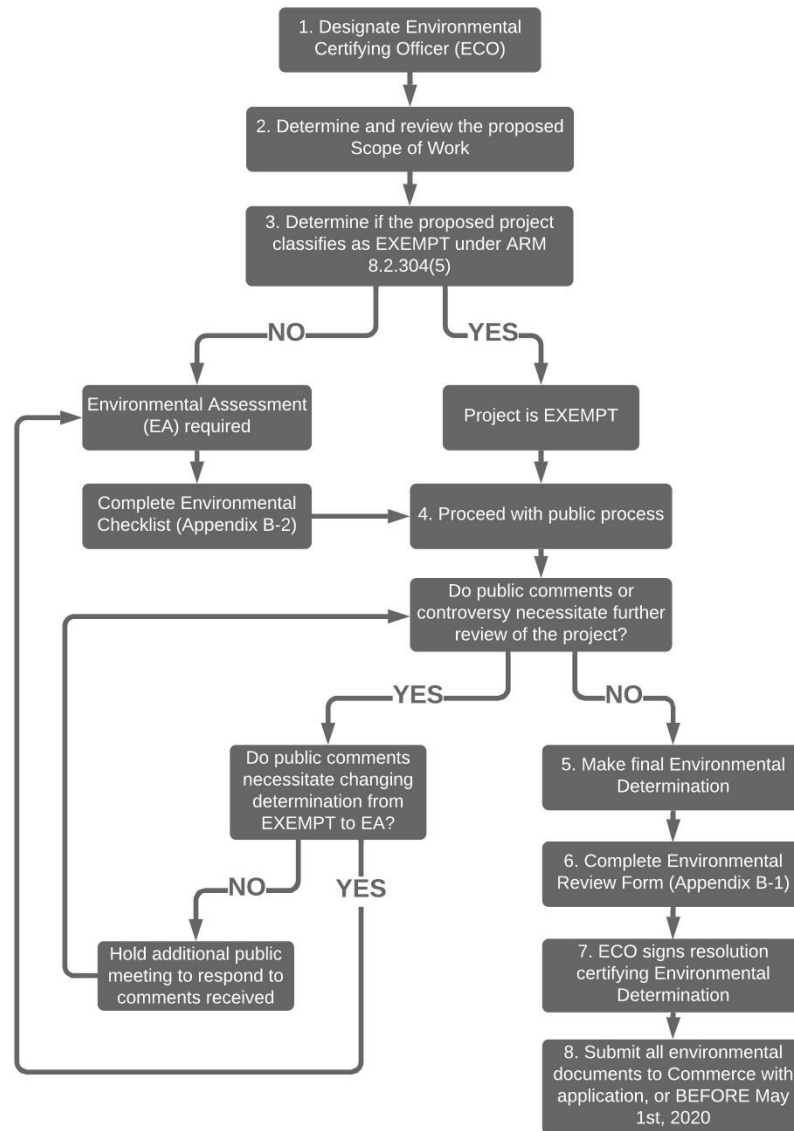
4) Proceed with the Public Process

- All applicants must hold a public meeting regardless of the expected level of review.
- Advertise meeting
- Make sure time and location facilitate public involvement
- Take meeting minutes to record attendance and all comments and items discussed.
- Responding to public comments may require holding a second meeting
- In some cases, a project which was initially thought to be Exempt will require completing an Environmental Assessment to fully address public comments and concerns. This typically happens when the preliminary determination is not in line with the full scope of the project, or when there is significant public controversy over the proposed project.



Environmental Review Process Outline

For Exempt and Environmental Assessment Projects



Environmental Review cont.

- 5) Make a Final Environmental Determination
- 6) Complete the Environmental Review Form(Appendix B1)
- 7) ECO signs resolution certifying the Environmental Determination
- 8) Submit all documents to Commerce along with application, on or **BEFORE May 1st, 2020.**



Environmental Review cont.

- All necessary environmental review of the proposed project is recommended to be completed prior to submission of the application for grant funding.
- Commerce will accept applications on **February 28, 2020** without a completed environmental review process documentation, as long as the applicant submits documentation of a completed environmental review process by **May 1, 2020**.



MHPG Grant Administration

- MHPG Project Administration Manual on the Division website provides information on how to administer a MHPG project once awarded.
- We will provide a future webinar detailing grant administration for projects that are awarded.



Find out more

- Application Guidelines, Application, including a Word version, Grant Administration Manual and appendices are available on our website:

COMDEV.MT.GOV

[Montana Historic Preservation Program](#)



Frequently Asked Questions



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can MHPG funds be used for operations?

A: Operational expenses are not eligible for funding.

Q: Can an applicant apply for more than one grant?

A: Yes. Multiple applications can be submitted by one applicant for different projects, but multiple applicants cannot apply for the same project. For example, a local government might apply for needed improvements to multiple historic buildings but may not apply for multiple grants for a single building. Similarly, a nonprofit and business cannot both submit applications for the same building or historic site.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will funds be available?

A: Awards will be made during the 2021 legislative session. Once the legislature passes the bill, it is then submitted to the Governor for signature to become effective. The date that the bill becomes effective will be the official award date. After this date grantees may incur reimbursable project costs. Activity before this date cannot be reimbursed with MHPG funds.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: This grant program is reimbursement. Does that mean grantees have to raise the full amount up front?

A: Program reimbursement grants will not require funds up front. Project funds are dispersed by submitting draw requests and applicable invoices to our office for processing. Projects may have multiple draw requests, depending on the project size, timeline, and budget. Typically, invoices require payment within 30 days, allowing time for grantees to request funds from Commerce before the invoice is due. While we do request 15 days to process such draws, our team recognizes the need to expedite such requests as quickly as possible. Our team will be in regular communication with each grant awardee and/or administrator throughout the startup process, draw requests, and close out process.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is an organizational application required to have a strategic plan, operational plan, or fully-audited financials?

A: Organizations are not required to conduct strategic plans, operating plans, or fully audited financials to be eligible or competitive for grant funding in the program. As part of the application process, providing such materials when available helps to set the context of the institution and the project. Applicants should feel comfortable submitting any plans created, whether that be a more succinct board-created annual strategy or a full-scale strategic plan. If a plan is not available, then an organization can articulate its goals in response to the application questions.



Historic Preservation Questions?

State Historic Preservation Office
1301 East Lockey Avenue
Helena MT 59620
(406) 444-7715
mtshpo@mt.gov



MHPG Questions?

Community and Economic Vitality Program

Community Development Division

Montana Department of Commerce

406.841.2770

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